

From the Managing Editor

FROM Los Angeles to New York City, departing SSG John Valceanu provides a coast-to-coast comparison of Army recruiting activity, starting on page 14 in this issue.

This month's cover story, by Steve Harding, takes a look at "Los Al," home of the sole remaining military airfield in the greater Los Angeles basin. And Heike Hasenauer takes readers for a visit to the communications links that hold NATO together in "ACCAP Soldiers."

Former Soldiers intern Sarah McCoy dishes up the inside skinny on America's love affair with "fast foods" and the temptations of "super sizing." Stop in or drive through for your entrée and side dish, starting on page 44.

Finally, we welcome the projected arrival of our new editor in chief. While MAJ John E. Suttle is new to Soldiers, he's no stranger to Army public affairs. He last served in that capacity in the Pentagon in the Office of the Secretary of the Army. Welcome aboard, sir.



An Army of One

I AM not sure the new Army recruiting commercial is sending the intended message.

What the commercial shows is a lone soldier apparently doing his own thing versus being with the group of soldiers going in the other direction. Is this what was intended?

I hope we are not telling young men and women that they can join the Army and "do their own thing" and not be part of the team.

LTC Michael F. Tanigawa (Ret.)
Ewa Beach, Hawaii

IN my opinion, the Army's new slogan is not being pitched correctly.

From the time a recruit enters the Army, it is individual personal commitment and conviction that gets the young soldier through the first trying days of Army life. This same personal commitment and conviction also gets the maturing soldier through all of the many trying days of an Army career.

Yes, we as soldiers accomplish everything as a team, but without the personal commitment from each team member the team as a whole will soon find itself ineffective.

It is this same personal commitment that causes you to accomplish the many selfless acts required of all soldiers. I taught NCO development courses in the Army for more than nine years and I can tell you that it doesn't matter how bad the team or class wants a soldier to pass a course. If the individual soldier does not possess the right amount of personal commitment and conviction, that soldier will fail.

You are the only "ONE" who can make these events and, ultimately, all of these life-changing events a success.

Most Informative

JUST received the new **Soldiers** almanac. Great job as usual. You all deserve a "done good" – most informative one I've seen thus far.

Can't find anything you've forgotten! I find it hard to wait until the February issue when the new active-duty and reserve-component pay scales come out.

Again, great job, and thank you for the work you do providing up-to-date information to the soldiers.

Timothy L. Winkler
via e-mail

YOUR staff did a fantastic job of creating the collage featuring the Armed Forces Recreation Centers in the January issue. The response has been fantastic, both internally and externally. More importantly, the AFRC collage could not have been placed in a more suitable edition (**The Soldiers Almanac**!) This is by far the most effective promotion on behalf of the AFRCs in a while. It has been a pleasure working with you and I look forward to further collaborations in the future.

Cheryl Mbaye, USACFSC
Alexandria, Va.

Without individual personal commitment, and most of all the personal sacrifices from the soldiers' spouses, families and loved ones, the Army as a whole will fail. When each and every "ONE" of us do not possess this personal commitment, we fail our soldiers and ultimately these same soldiers will choose to not stay in the fold. This retention of these fine men and women is what makes the Army strong.

CSM Russ J. Saker
Belton, Mo.

Current ads show "An Army of One" in more familiar teamwork settings. Be assured the slogan reflects both the Army's combined might and the soldier's personal strength. Both ideas are part of our heritage. GEN J. Lawton Collins said: "The most precious commodity with which the Army

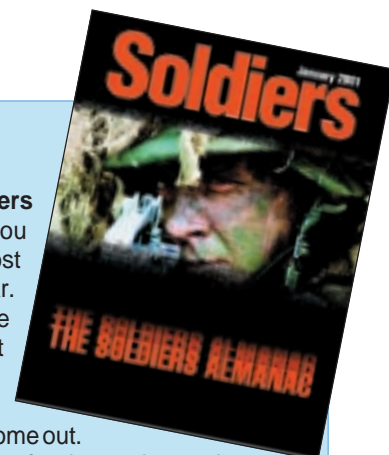
deals is the individual soldier who is the heart and soul of our combat forces."

Black Berets

MAKING the beret the headgear of the common soldier will make the beret common, no longer the symbol of uncommon skills, abilities, courage, dedication and tough training that the common soldier does not have and could not survive.

You cannot make someone a better soldier by giving them a spiffy new hat to wear. Being a better soldier comes from inside, coaxed by dedicated NCOs and officers at every level who lead by example, and instilled by the toughest, most realistic training imaginable.

Instead of instilling the ranger esprit in the common soldier, this policy will destroy



MY husband is both a ranger and special forces, and is a combat veteran of both Grenada and Desert Storm. As

I believe that allowing every soldier to wear a beret, in particular a black beret, is nothing more than a slap in the face to every special operations soldier. Giving a black beret to the entire Army is telling the mem-

Don't get me wrong. I believe in the Army and all it stands for, and my husband does, too. We believe steps need to be taken to raise morale, but gimmicks like this black beret ordeal are like disavowing that there are individuals out here in

SGT Claudio A. Mungaray
Los Alamitos, Calif.

THE May issue of Hot Topics, the quarterly insert to Soldiers, is scheduled to cover the black beret.

Soldiers is for soldiers and DA civilians. We invite readers' views. Stay under 150 words — a post card will do — and include your name, rank and address. We'll withhold your name if you desire and may condense your views because of space. We can't publish or answer every one, but we'll use representative views. Write to: **Feedback, Soldiers, 9325 Gunston Road, Ste. S108, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-5581**, or e-mail: soldiers@belvoir.army.mil.